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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 8TH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 25 September 1991, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. SHIHABI (Saudi Arabia)

later: Mr. MIN (Myanmar)
(Vice-President)

- Address by Mr. Carlos Andres Perez, President of the Republic of Venezuela

- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by

Mr. Genscher (Germany)

Mr. Qian Qichen (China)

Mr. Hurd (United Kingdom)

Mr. Dienstbier (Czechoslovakia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

ADDRESS BY MR. CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): The Assembly will first hear an address by the President of the Republic of Venezuela.

Mr. Carlos Andres Perez, President of the Republic of Venezuela, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of Venezuela, Mr. Carlos Andres Perez, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President PEREZ (interpretation from Spanish): Mr. President, I have come before the representatives of the community of nations in order to express my country's views on the great issues of our times and to reaffirm our commitment to understanding and solidarity.

But before beginning my statement I would like to extend my most sincere congratulations to Mr. Samir Shihabi on his election as President of the United Nations General Assembly at the forty-sixth session and, on behalf of Venezuela, I would like express our enthusiastic welcome to the nations that are joining our Organization - Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, the Republic of Korea, the People's Republic of Korea, Micronesia and the Marshall Islands.

These deliberations are taking place at a time when a new international order is being defined and when the developing countries cannot be absent.

We, the countries represented here, must ensure that the momentous significance of this exceptional time is not weakened or tarnished and that the promising momentum unleashed by these breathtaking changes remains unabated.

(President Perez)

Behind us lie chapters of confrontation, intransigence and inflexibility and times of sterile, senseless controversies, dominated by the terrifying euphemism of nuclear deterrence.

The prospects of a less conflictive world should not make us postpone action on, or sidestep the challenges and dilemmas facing us. Some of them are old; others are new, left over from a bipolar world that still moulds historical events in terms of inequality and injustice. The building of peace requires an innovative look, not only at the conflicts still persisting, but also at the pressing economic and social problems experienced by the vast majority of mankind and the growing gap between poverty and prosperity.

Let us move now from East-West confrontation to a North-South co-operation that will lead to a single united world.

It is time to ask both the United States and Cuba to cease the confrontation which began in the context of the cold war. Let us have confidence that Cuba will open itself to the universal concept of democracy as we would all wish and that the United States will be open to a dialogue that puts an end to sanctions that have lost all justification and validity.

The evolution of relations between the United States and the Soviet Union, the latter immersed in a process of vital political and economic choice, dominates the world scene, which is fraught with expectation and uncertainty.

The after-effects of the Iraq-Kuwait conflict, compounded by the interminable crisis in the Middle East, have reawakened and brought to the forefront the need to devise a new world order that will put an end to such situations.

(President Perez)

May I take this opportunity to express our firmest support for the efforts made by United States Secretary of State, Mr. Baker, to promote a conference of countries involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict that threatens to jeopardize the dramatic process ending the occupation of Kuwait.

Events in the Middle East, the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, Asia and Africa reveal serious obstacles to the achievement of a new world order, making it necessary to redefine international security and devise more efficient mechanisms. Tensions of a territorial, ethnic or religious nature and an upsurge of nationalism have given rise to serious problems of inexplicable virulence.

The threat of disintegration of the State of Yuguslavia cannot be viewed by the United Nations as an internal problem. Venezuela associates itself with those who have called for the restoration of peace in Yugoslavia and we support the position of those Members of the Organization who are encouraging discussion in the Security Council.

Interdependence is a phenomenon brought about by the complex realities of the contemporary world, but it must cease to be a new form of dependence which hinders efforts made to incorporate the countries of the South into the international economy, as has been stated in the report of the South Commission of which I was a member.

(President Perez)

In this context, the Non-Aligned Movement is acquiring a unique importance with the disappearance of the ideological rhetoric of the past. Its task will now be to participate actively in encouraging South-South cooperation and in promoting dialogue with the North.

I venture to say with optimism that the new historic age that is beginning will lead to the inclusion on the international agenda of a comprehensive approach to North-South relations so that interdependence will be understood as an interweaving of problems and solutions. There are many useful areas and actions that could lead to the use of a new methodology in North-South relations. Environmental conservation and the struggle against drug trafficking are of universal priority.

Such questions lie in the future of continental and Caribbean Latin America. Last year in this forum, we spoke of the progress democracy had made in our countries, and said that, for this process to be irreversible, a solution had to be found to the problems of critical and extreme poverty. The inevitable macroeconomic adjustment programmes, necessary for the modernization of our societies, cannot proceed without a concurrent war against hunger, unemployment and lack of opportunity.

The democracies that have become stabilized in Latin America will not be secure if the governments of the area cannot significantly improve the quality of life of their people. Our democracies will not be able to survive if there is a massive increase in critical poverty and if social tensions are aggravated. We do not want aid. What we want is trade on reciprocal and balanced terms. We want a satisfactory conclusion to the Uruguay Round, which has been held up by trade confrontations between the United States and Europe,

(President Perez)

while our own trade is subject to a wide range of protectionist measures by the industrialized countries.

We must acknowledge - and we Latin Americans have not done so in the past - that our relations with the United States are changing for the better. It somehow seems, however, that Europe has not yet been able to grasp the importance of our region, although we have advised the Community's senior officials of this fact.

For this reason, we support the spirit of President Bush's Enterprise for the Americas initiative, which poses the long-term challenge of a hemispheric market and at the same time includes the essential factors of debt, trade, investment and development. However, we still see, both in North America and in Europe, restrictive practices, whereby we are required to develop open economies. Yet, our natural advantages are deemed to be unfair or are referred to as dumping practices, and our exports are denied access to other markets. We welcome the growing interest Japan and other Asian nations have shown in our region.

We are making efforts to seek a solution to traditional territorial conflicts. We are working steadfastly to make the Latin American Economic System (SELA) a body of regional coordination and integration, and the Organization of American States (OAS) an effective instrument, atuned to the new urgent needs of the international context, an organization able to bring coherence to a hemispheric pact between the two large regions of the continent, north and south of the Rio Grande.

We are confident that this year we will share the satisfaction of seeing a definitive end to the bloody conflict in Central America, with peace achieved in El Salvador, through the mediation of the Secretary-General,

(President Perez)

Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, to whom I should like to pay a tribute for his intelligent guidance of the United Nations during this last very complex decade.

In order to complete this brief account of our Latin American vision of expectations and problems, may I say that we view with deep satisfaction the spectacular advances in our regional integration processes. The Andean Pact, the Common Market of the South, the Caribbean Community and the Group of Three have, among others, marked the new economic and integrationist history of Latin America; the Rio Group has become the political interlocutor for the coordination of regional action and its coherent international impact. In addition, we strongly support the beginning of the future hemispheric market through a process of trade integration, which is being conducted among the United States of America, Canada and Mexico.

It has become a commonplace to say that the world is on the threshold of a new era, a new time, a new age. No subject could be more appealing this fall of 1991 in this great global forum, the United Nations. Yet, this is not the first time that we speak about a new order. In the past we have advocated a new world economic order, and here in the United Nations, for an entire decade, resounding voices from all parts of the world have been heard, warning of the pressing need to change the perception and management of world affairs, both economic and political. We do not believe that these voices have gone unheeded. On the contrary, our persistent discourse has yielded some fruit. First of all, one of its main arguments has been well corroborated. We warned that the arms race would lead the world into an unprecedented critical situation, and that growing military expenditure would create conflicts for the big Powers themselves.

(President Perez)

It was impossible to understand the obstinacy of the big Powers in recognizing or heeding these warnings. Today, one of the great empires, that of the cold war, no longer exists. Military expenditure and the militarization of our societies have yielded the anticipated results. It was naive to believe that what might be devastating for some could be beneficial for others. The military expenditure of the West is a mirror image of that in the former Soviet Union. The policies of systematic confrontation were abetted by the military-industrial complexes of the great Powers. The manipulation of fear and the manipulation of information about arsenals were well-known tactics.

(President Perez)

The twentieth century leaves a balance sheet worthy of deep reflection. Two devastating wars in the first half of the century, and in the second half a long cold war that spurred a broad range of challenges and confrontations, that fed the most unusual regional conflicts and that counted among their victims the developing countries that became the theatre and not just the audience of this struggle and in so doing became participants in its madness.

The possibility of building a new world order is really just beginning. But for that order to come about and to be stable there must be prior acknowledgement of the fact that no one, no country, large or small, strong or weak, can remain on the sidelines or be dominant.

The idea of democracy is prevailing the world over. It is becoming widespread and the right of peoples is being recognized.

But we must understand that people consider democracy to mean well-being, progress in freedom, equitable economic and trade relations, an opening of markets, free communication among peoples, international cooperation, an end to domination and a balance between security and social expenditures.

It is not enough, in gratifying our optimism, simply to proclaim that a new order is being born. A new order is not born just because the world balance of power has collapsed. Existing challenges are tenacious. Renascent nationalisms, ethnic and religious conflicts, regional disagreements, forces that arise with anarchical impetus as a dramatic response to many decades of repression will not be easily handled or overcome.

The identity of all peoples, respect for them and protection of their values must be key factors in a new order so that political and religious dogmatisms abandon their resentments and do not become elements of destabilization.

(President Perez)

In this context we wish to mention the conflict beleaguering the people of the Sahara which must be solved with unconditional guarantees for the right to self-determination. We impatiently await the referendum that will enable the Sahraoui to join the democratic community of nations.

We are living in a revolutionary era of communications, of technology and science, but our time has not brought about a revolution in education or in culture. This is the great paradox, a paradox illustrative of the deep crisis confronting us. The message conveyed to the peoples of the world is not a positive one. It is not directed at preserving our fundamental values or at teaching peoples how to live together. The revolution in communications places us in simultaneous contact with all existing conflicts; its impact naturally contributes towards exalting one's one conflicts over those more remote.

To place such extraordinary technological resources at the service of culture, science, international cooperation and education, together with the need to protect children, is one of the challenges of the new world order that will bring back security and democracy to the world.

Last year was the year of the summit on children, convened by the political will of Heads of State the world over. Today we are happy to see that 30 Members of the United Nations have held national conferences to devise programmes of action aimed at rescuing our children from the aggression of poverty and malnutrition.

Were we to think that a new world order could be defined as a simple balance of military power or economic force, we would be prolonging the injustice and the discrimination that prevailed in the bipolar order that has passed.

(President Perez)

The time has come to approach seriously the issue of modernizing and adapting United Nations mechanisms as a system of collective security. Otherwise we would be condemning a group of countries to an unbridled search for self-protection in the absence of a security system that can protect the weak against the strong.

I responsibly heed the call of many peace-loving Governments so that our own people's aspiration for democracy can also become a permanent aspiration of the United Nations. The Organization will not be strengthened unless an agreement is reached to eliminate the right of veto exercised by the permanent members of the Security Council, a right that responded to circumstances and realities that have ceased to exist. This mechanism runs counter to the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations and limits its effective contributions to collective security.

The right to veto Security Council resolutions is a mechanism that limits the achievement of consensus among the Member States of the United Nations. The Security Council must be a representative body, and in no way should any of its members negate the majority view of the United Nations. If we want collective and democratic security, we must aspire to universal egalitarian law.

I wish to propose formally that this Assembly entrust to a committee of experts the study of new foundations for the organization and functioning of the Security Council. The countries now holding a decisive privilege would be full-fledged permanent members of the Council and the membership might even be expanded. Decisions on collective security would need at least a qualified majority of its members to reflect the general will of the international community.

(President Perez)

Last year I suggested in this forum the convening of a meeting between oil-producing and consumer countries to coordinate the use and production of a resource fundamental to the welfare of our civilization. In spite of some scepticism, the meeting was held with the explicit and constructive support of President Francois Mitterand. In July this year in Paris, major conclusions were reached as to ways and means of improving information and analysis of the energy world of the future.

(President Perez)

We also believe that there is an urgent need to achieve a new environmental order. We shall be attending the world conference on the environment in Brazil as a country from the Amazon region and as a member of the Amazon Pact, and we aspire to playing a leading role in the adoption of major global decisions in this respect.

I cannot but refer to the second summit conference of the Group of Fifteen to be held in Caracas next November. The Group of Fifteen acts as a consulting forum for the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, to coordinate the policies of the South at the international level and to assist in the formulation and implementation of cooperation programmes.

The year 1992 will mark the 500th anniversary of the encounter between Europe and America. On our continent, we are preparing to celebrate this event by considering the advances of our own history and its impact. We hope that the rest of the world represented here will share with us the celebration of this important historic event that changed the course of mankind.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of Venezuela for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Carlos Andres Perez, President of the Republic of Venezuela, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

AGENDA ITEM 9

GENERAL DEBATE

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I should like to remind representatives that, in accordance with a decision taken by the General Assembly at its 3rd plenary meeting, the list of speakers will be closed this afternoon at 6 p.m.

Mr. GENSCHER (Germany) (spoke in German; English text furnished by the delegation): This session of the General Assembly is taking place in a world that has undergone fundamental change. The United Nations is the focal point of mankind's new hopes and expectations. This makes your office, Mr. President, one of special responsibility. I wish you luck and success and greet you as the representative of a country with which we, Germany, have long-standing close relations.

I welcome most heartily the Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania as new Members of the United Nations. They had lost their freedom and independence in 1940 as a result of that criminal document, the Hitler-Stalin pact. All the greater, therefore, is the pleasure felt by us Germans at the fact that history has at long last justly rewarded these courageous peoples with the freedom they longed for.

I welcome the two Korean States. We hope that the wish of the Korean people will be fulfilled, that they will be able, like the German people, to live in freedom and democracy in one sovereign and independent State. I also welcome the Marshall Islands and Micronesia to the family of nations.

Every year since 1974 I have addressed this Assembly on behalf of the Federal Republic of Germany. On each occasion I have expressed our intention to work for a state of peace in Europe in which the German people could recover their unity in free self-determination. On 3 October 1990 that wish came true.

At this moment I commemorate all those who had to sacrifice their lives and their freedom in prisons and camps because they wanted to live in a European Germany of freedom, democracy and human rights. We pay a tribute to all those who, in what was then the German Democratic Republic, as everywhere

(Mr. Genscher, Germany)

in Central and Eastern Europe, took to the streets to gain freedom, democracy and unity by peaceful means.

Today I address the Assembly for the first time as the Foreign Minister of united Germany. Germany takes its place in the family of United Nations on the basis of the United Nations Charter.

(Mr. Genscher, Germany)

As a European country, we are committed to the Charter of Paris. We Germans regard the greater weight of our people united in one State as a mandate to assume greater responsibility for freedom, democracy and human rights in a European Germany which has put behind it the nation-State thinking of the past. While the division of Germany made manifest the division of Europe, German unity today contributes to the unification of the whole European continent.

Europe stands at a crossroads in its history. We Germans want this Europe to develop in close transatlantic solidarity. The North Atlantic alliance and the involvement of the United States and Canada in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) process are a reflection of that solidarity. The European Community's transatlantic declaration underscores the will for ever closer European-North American cooperation.

The aims of the policy of united Germany are as follows:

First, we want the European Community, of which we are a founding member, to develop into a European Union and ultimately into the United States of Europe. We want this year to bring a final decision in favour of political union and economic and monetary union.

Second, we want all democratic States in Europe to be able to accede to this Community. For the new democracies in Eastern Europe which are introducing market economies the way must be opened, through association, to full membership.

Third, we want to bring the whole of Europe ever closer together on the basis of the Charter of Paris. We also want the peoples of the Soviet Union, who are adopting a new form of coexistence as sovereign republics, to take their place in this Europe.

(Mr. Genscher, Germany)

Europe will find its new order in confederal structures; these will manifest themselves in different forms. They will take account of existing structures and will afford the regions new opportunities. With greater unity, Europe will at the same time acquire greater diversity.

It is the responsibility of the Western democracies also to establish the material conditions for European unity so that new boundaries do not divide Europe into haves and have-nots. New priorities will have to be fixed for material assistance as well. Germany is facing up to this task: as Europeans, we aim, together with other Europeans, to create one Europe by providing assistance for our Eastern neighbours. No one in the West will be permanently well off if those in the East are permanently badly off.

Fourth, as a country in the heart of Europe, we want to devote all our energy to achieving the unity of our continent. This is underscored by the unique link between Germany and France. Also important in this process is the close cooperation with our Eastern neighbours. I emphasized this in the Declaration of Weimar, signed on 29 August 1991 with my French colleague, Roland Dumas, and my Polish colleague, Professor Krzysztof Skubiszewski.

As the door to unity began to open for the German people in the autumn of 1989, I stated here before the United Nations on 27 September that year that we wanted Poland to know that the Polish people's

> "... right to live within secure borders will not be called into question, not now or in the future, through territorial claims by us Germans". (A/44/PV.8, p. 18)

That was a signal, not only to the Polish people but to all our neighbours.

(Mr. Genscher, Germany)

That statement was incorporated into the two-plus-four Treaty and the German-Polish Treaty, which is at present being debated by the parliaments of both countries. The German-Czechoslovak Treaty on Good-Neighbourly Relations and Friendly Cooperation is likewise about to be signed. These treaties, like the major treaty with the Soviet Union and the treaties with the other countries of Central and Eastern Europe still to come, manifest our intention to work towards one Europe. Our relationship with the Soviet Union has meanwhile assumed central importance for the whole of Europe.

The German people are emphasizing their determination to draw the conclusions from the ill-fated chapters of our history in this century and to help build a Europe based on responsibility and not on the power politics of the past.

Fifth, we want the Western alliance to continue its efforts to ensure stability throughout Europe in a changing political environment. The contacts already established with the former members of the Warsaw Pact, including the Soviet Union, must be developed into a comprehensive partnership for security. Cooperative security structures must emerge. Our alliance, as Czechoslovak President Vaclav Havel confirmed in his address to the NATO Council on 21 March, 1991, was never a threat to others.

The ending of the East-West confrontation has opened the way for the radical reduction of excessively large military arsenals. We want conventional disarmament to be pursued consistently, in accordance with the first Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. We want a global prohibition on chemical weapons. We want the removal of short-range nuclear missiles and of nuclear artillery ammunition - this is urgent: such weapons are increasingly destabilizing; the danger of their proliferation is

(Mr. Genscher, Germany)

growing; they must disappear at long last. We expect the nuclear Powers to continue the reduction of strategic nuclear weapons.

Sixth, we want to make the CSCE capable of action. After the establishment of the Council of CSCE Foreign Ministers and of the CSCE emergency mechanism, I submitted specific proposals at the CSCE Conference on the Human Dimension, held in Moscow on 10 September this year, aimed at more effective protection for human rights, democracy and the rule of law. It must also be possible to afford such protection without the consent of the country concerned.

The right to self-determination and, directly linked with it, the rights of minorities, must be respected everywhere. Europe is heading towards more identity and more plurality. From this must not emerge neonationalism. European structures must absorb these developments. For all questions we must have a European response. That is a task for the European Community, and it is a task for the CSCE.

The crisis-management capability of the CSCE must be enhanced. The less necessary it becomes to protect oneself from threats from outside, the more we need a system in which all cooperate in guaranteeing common security. If we together learn to guarantee our security from one another, we in Europe will be on the way to a collective system of security.

(Mr. Genscher, Germany)

Seventh, we Germans want the new Europe to exercise its global responsibility. It should not and will not be introspective. The trend towards a Euro-Atlantic area of cooperation stretching from Vancouver to Vladivostok opens up a historic opportunity for development for the countries of the South as well.

The world economic summit of the seven industrial nations - including Japan - faces its greatest test where global responsibilities are concerned. The triad of North America, Europe and Japan must prove its worth. The third world will not remain in the shadow of this development. It will benefit vitally from this new era.

The ending of the East-West conflict in Europe is at last releasing those energies tied up by the cold war which mankind now needs in order to solve the global challenges of the twenty-first century. The first fruits of this new development are already appearing. The East-West confrontation is no longer being staged in the third world. Freedom is emerging in Angola and in Cambodia, and in Afghanistan too there are signs of hope.

In the Middle East as well a historic opportunity for peace is opening up. We all hope that at the forthcoming peace conference all participants will at long last realize that there is no justifiable alternative to a genuine balance of interests that gives Israel security and peace and the Palestinians self-determination. With great commitment and unending patience, Secretary of State Baker has paved the way for such a balance. In this he has Germany's full support. The General Assembly resolution equating Zionism with racism must be repealed. We support the American initiative in that regard.

(Mr. Genscher, Germany)

In South Africa, President De Klerk and Nelson Mandela have taken decisive steps toward creating a South Africa free from oppression and racial hatred. All citizens of that country must participate with equal rights in its political, economic and social life. This must be guaranteed by a new constitution. A democratic South Africa can and must become a locomotive of development and stability in a region still afflicted by poverty and conflicts.

The economic fruits of the new development in Europe are likewise discernible. As the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development has calculated, the single European market will mean a 7 per cent increase in the exports of developing countries to the European Community. That will boost their earnings by $10 billion. And if in a few years' time Central and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union become regions of dynamic growth, they will also develop into important new markets for exports from the South. Above all, however, the end of the arms race between East and West will release tremendous energies which will benefit the third world above all.

Eighth, we Germans want the United Nations to become the main forum for action in the new world order. To that end, it is absolutely essential that Security Council resolutions be implemented, completely and unconditionally. Aggressors like Saddam Hussein must no longer be permitted to keep people in constant fear with aggression and means of mass destruction. We support President Bush in his resolve to counteract fresh provocations. Our world Organization must be able to meet the challenges of the new era. Conflict prevention, demographic policy and environmental protection must be improved.

The ending of the East-West conflict has freed the world Organization from its paralysis. This new freedom to act must now be used. Germany is prepared to play its part. The united Germany will assume all rights and meet

(Mr. Genscher, Germany)

all obligations of the United Nations Charter, including measures of collective security, also with our armed forces. For this purpose we intend to amend our constitution.

Ninth, in order to improve coordination of United Nations disaster relief measures, we advocate the appointment of a high-ranking representative exclusively responsible to the Secretary-General. This person would have to coordinate all international relief measures and have immediately available an emergency fund and national rescue and relief services.

We want to enhance the status of the Secretary-General himself. He has frequently spoken of this necessity, and rightly so. Now his tenure is coming to an end. The world has come to respect him as a guardian of peace, a champion of human rights, and an advocate of the poor. In an era of epochal change, he has, with clear vision and a firm hand, enhanced the reputation of the United Nations. For this the family of nations owes him a debt of gratitude and appreciation.

Tenth, we want to strengthen the instruments asserting the rule of law in the world. The experience of our history has committed us in a special way to freedom, the rule of law and human rights. We pursue these goals in Europe, and we intend to pursue them in the United Nations as well. We intend to pursue a policy which focuses on the individual, makes human rights and human dignity the measures of all human action and does not paralyze people's energy and enterprise.

The world today realizes that this is a precondition for prosperity, social progress and peace. It also realizes that despotism negates development and freedom. The alarming figure of 15 million refugees worldwide

(Mr. Genscher, Germany)

shows that the world is still far from ensuring adequate protection for human rights and the rights of minorities.

The violation of human rights must no longer be a domestic concern of individual States but a domestic concern of the community of nations as a whole. Today sovereignty must meet its limits in the responsibility of States for mankind as a whole and for the survival of Creation. When human rights are trampled under foot, the family of nations is not confined to the role of spectator. It can - it must - intervene.

We are witness to the persecution of the Kurdish people. Anyone who threatens peoples with genocide, anyone who deliberately destroys nature's already fragile equilibrium in an entire region, must be brought to account before an international tribunal. We call for an international court of justice of the United Nations where crimes against humanity, crimes against peace, genocide, war crimes and environmental criminality can be prosecuted and punished. We call for a court of justice to which anyone who feels that his human rights have been violated may appeal. We call for the proscription of torture and capital punishment.

We need an effective international environmental law regime with appropriate international controls. It must be possible to impose sanctions on countries that deliberately destroy the environment. We also have to effectively prevent environmental warfare. I ask the General Assembly to support the draft resolution on this important matter which Germany proposes to introduce.

(Mr. Genscher, Germany)

We call upon all States to accede to the International Convention against the Taking of Hostages, and we call for sanctions against countries which tolerate hostage-taking. The World Conference on Human Rights, scheduled to take place in 1993, must deal with those questions that are of such vital importance for a new culture of international coexistence. We are looking forward to hosting the Conference in Berlin, that symbol of a new era of humanity and solidarity in Europe.

Eleventh, as in the case of civil human rights, we seek protection for economic and social human rights. The united Germany will continue to render a significant contribution to the development of the third world. In spite of the challenges presented by economic and ecological reconstruction in central and eastern Europe, the diversion of capital from South to East that had been feared has not taken place. This reflects the determination of the Western industrial nations to live up to their responsibility for development on a global scale.

Germany, in spite of the enormous domestic strain on its resources and the disproportionately high level of support for its eastern neighbours, has increased its official development assistance even more. Furthermore, the German people last year donated more than 1 billion Deutschmarks for humanitarian purposes in third-world countries. This is proof that their own country's problems and those of central and eastern Europe have not caused them to forget the plight of people in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

There is a growing appreciation in third-world countries that it is not enough simply to expect the donor countries to do their duty, but that they themselves are primarily responsible for putting their houses in order. In future the German Government will, more than previously, make its assistance

(Mr. Genscher, Germany)

conditional upon the extent to which recipients are prepared to create the right pluralistic, rule-of-law and free-market framework. Countries which are more concerned with strengthening their armies than seeing to the needs of their people can no longer count on our support.

Considering the degree of hunger and poverty, annual military spending of close to $200 billion by the third world is irresponsible. The responsibility lies with the buyers and sellers of weapons alike. The mere freezing of this military expenditure would save about $15 billion a year - about one quarter of annual development assistance.

The restriction of arms exports requires, as a first step, greater transparency. Since 1980 I have been urging the world Organization to establish a register in which transfers of weapons would be recorded. This proposal, which is now being advocated by the European Community as a whole, should, during this session of the General Assembly, at long last meet with broad support. We Germans will place even greater restrictions on the export of arms.

Heavy indebtedness remains for many countries one of the greatest obstacles to development. The debate on Africa has shown that we need a new arrangement particularly for the poorest countries. The amount of debt remission should correspond to the plight of the country concerned. The markets of the North must not remain closed. This situation is depriving the South of proceeds from foreign exchange amounting to an estimated $100 billion a year. That is about twice the total sum of development aid. This is why the outcome of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) negotiations is not a matter for the industrial countries among themselves. It affects above all the future of the developing countries.

(Mr. Genscher, Germany)

Twelfth, we want the third-world countries to participate on an equal footing in the dialogue on mankind's future, in all respects - political, economic, ecological and cultural. As before, we regard the Non-Aligned Movement as an indispensable source of global stability. Mankind's new challenges, the greater interdependence and responsibility of the community of nations make new forms of dialogue based on partnership between East and West and between North and South imperative. The global trend towards a free society, pluralistic democracy and market economy has created new, favourable conditions for such a "dialogue of the one world". We must now use this opportunity.

While we are here debating the common future tasks of the world community, war is being waged in Europe. People are being killed, are bleeding to death. Fighting is going on in Croatia - but not only there. The President and the Prime Minister of Yugoslavia say that the army has placed itself beyond political control. They have appealed to the United Nations. The peoples of Yugoslavia have a right to peace. The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), the European Community and the Western European Union (WEU) are striving to bring about a cease-fire and a peace agreement. For this they require the support of the community of nations and the Security Council. We expect a binding weapons embargo. We expect the Security Council to adopt a clear, unequivocal position so that the fighting can be stopped. The use of force to achieve political ends must remain unlawful. We shall never recognize the acquisition of territory by force. Anyone aiming to alter Yugoslavia's internal and external borders by force is challenging the very foundations of human coexistence. Germany has in recent decades developed friendly relations with all peoples of Yugoslavia. We do

(Mr. Genscher, Germany)

not take sides against one people or another; we take the side of the women and mothers who do not want their husbands and sons to die in a senseless war. We take the side of peace against war, of human rights, of the rights of minorities and the right to self-determination. We wish success to the peace conference that we together with France proposed to the arbitration commission and to the mediator, Lord Carrington. Within the framework of the European Community and the CSCE arbitration mechanism we shall make every effort to achieve a peace settlement in which the peoples of Yugoslavia alone will determine their future, as the CSCE Foreign Ministers decided under my chairmanship in Berlin on 19 June 1991.

On the threshold of the new millennium mankind faces a global challenge that overshadows all else: that of fighting poverty, reducing population growth and protecting the natural sources of life. What the twenty-first century will look like depends on the decisions we take in the next 10 years.

The concern with freedom in the past two years has changed the countenance of Europe, indeed of the world, at breathtaking speed. What could not be changed in that short period were the economic and social conditions of the people. If a billion people have to manage on less than one dollar a day, if 23 per cent of the world's population commands over 85 per cent of the world's income, then everybody's security is threatened. Man is still waging war against creation.

We need a comprehensive peace pact between peoples, between nations, and between man and nature. These are the tasks for a new world domestic policy.

(Mr. Genscher, Germany)

We need to realize that the social issue on a global scale is the great challenge of the new era. Only decent human conditions for all create freedom. It is only to this kind of freedom that the future will belong. In the last three and a half decades the population of the third world has almost doubled. In the next generation the developing countries will account for over 80 per cent of the world's population. Today already, more than one third of the world's population is undernourished. What will the situation be like a generation hence? This question in itself indicates the whole dimension of our responsibility. Our task is to meet the needs of the present and at the same time protect the interests of future generations - and also to attempt to reconcile economy and ecology.

The accumulation of arms during the cold war has consumed astronomical sums. Now it is a question of directing our combined efforts to the central task of the twenty-first century: solving the world's social, demographic and ecological problems and pursuing disarmament.

This is the spiritual and moral challenge confronting the nations of the world. New thinking is required from each one of us. The signs are there. When did the voice of freedom and democracy speak with such force as today? It is true: the world has changed fundamentally. It has changed through the spirit of freedom. Everywhere human rights and human dignity are gaining ground. Hardly ever have we been more aware of this than on 21 August this year, when the Moscow coup against freedom failed. On exactly that day 23 years previously the Soviet army had brutally crushed the Prague Spring. This time the soldiers of the same army refused to shoot at the people who had gathered in Moscow's "Square of Free Russia" to defend freedom and democracy with their lives. There it became clear to the whole world:

(Mr. Genscher, Germany)

Mikhail Gorbachev's courageous reformist policy has become irreversible. Today already he has taken his place in the annals of history.

The events of that day gave the lie to all those in the West who did not believe that the peoples of the Soviet Union had the will for freedom and democracy. Boris Yeltsin, Eduard Shevardnadze, Anatoly Sobchak, Gavril Popov and Alexander Yakovlev stood unshakably with many, many of their fellow-citizens for freedom and peace.

What Europe and the world was twice denied in this century our generation has the chance to fulfil: President Bush's vision of a new world order. It is the vision of a world community sharing responsibility on the basis of law, the self-determination of nations, international solidarity and respect for man and nature.

If this historic opportunity for new and lasting international solidarity is not to evaporate through economic want, then the West must not forsake the people who risked their lives for freedom. I said it in Davos in 1987 and I say it again today: this concerns Europe's, America's and Japan's joint responsibility for global peace. The chance to create a lastingly free and democratic new Soviet Union is a chance for the whole world.

The German American philosopher Hans Jonas said: "Hope derives from responsibility for the universe". Europe has reflected on its fundamental values and is building its common home. In spite of all the difficulties, this peaceful undertaking is a message of hope to the world.

The united Germany places itself for all time on the side of freedom and democracy, on the side of human rights and human dignity, on the side of the right of self-determination and of protection for minorities. The German

(Mr. Genscher, Germany)

people side once and for all with the inalienable values which alone permit a humane society to develop.

That is the message of the united Germany to the community of nations to which I have the honour to speak here today for the first time as the representative of one Germany. As a European Germany we intend to face the global challenges. In this we regard every person on earth as our neighbour.

Mr. QIAN QICHEN (China) (interpretation from Chinese): Sir, first of all, please allow me to warmly congratulate you on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly of the United Nations at its forty-sixth session. I believe that, with your wisdom and experience, you will accomplish with distinction the noble task entrusted to you by the Assembly. Meanwhile I would like to express my appreciation and thanks to your predecessor, Mr. De Marco, for his positive contribution to the work of the last session.

Seven new Members have been admitted at the current session to the United Nations. This is a gratifying event. I wish to extend my sincere congratulations to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Latvia and the Republic of Lithuania on their admission to membership in the United Nations.

It is still fresh in people's memory that the forty-fifth sesion of the General Assembly was convened under the dark cloud of the ongoing Gulf crisis. As we gather here for the forty-sixth session, this dark cloud has already dispersed. Yet peace, security and development still face grave challenges in various regions and the world as a whole. And the people of all countries are anxious to see the establishment of a new international order which will make our world a better one to live in. Though the past year has

(Mr. Qian Qichen, China)

seen some relaxation of tension in the international situation, more serious problems of instability and turbulence have emerged, with the sharpening of new conflicts and North-South contradictions. This has caused widespread concern on the part of the international community.

The tendency towards reduced tension and stability on the Korean peninsula accords with the aspirations of the Korean people and serves peace and security in Asia and the world at large. The simultaneous admission at the current session of North and South Korea as full Members of the United Nations is an important event conducive to the relaxation of tension on the Korean peninsula. We hope that both North and South Korea will continue to improve their relations through dialogue and consultations, expand their exchanges and cooperation and gradually remove antagonism and estrangement between them, looking towards the final independent and peaceful reunification of the nation.

(Mr. Qian Qichen, China)

The Cambodian Supreme National Council, under the presidency of Prince Norodom Sihanouk, has held several successful meetings, and, as the organ of supreme power in Cambodia, has sent its delegation to this session. Here we should like to express our warm welcome to the Cambodian delegation headed by Prince Sihanouk. Proceeding from their overall national interest, all the Cambodian parties are working to set aside their past mutual grievances and strengthen their unity and cooperation with a view to attaining soon a comprehensive political settlement of the Cambodian question on the basis of the United Nations framework document. They are making fruitful efforts to build an independent, peaceful, neutral and non-aligned Cambodia. For over 10 years the international community, the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, the members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations and the other participants in the Paris International Conference on Cambodia have all made great efforts to achieve a political settlement of the Cambodian question. We wish to see an early resumption of the Paris conference and the official conclusion of an agreement on a comprehensive settlement of the Cambodian question. We believe that a settlement of the Cambodian question will bring about peace and stability in South-East Asia and will create a favourable environment for cooperation between, and the economic development of, all countries in the region.

The situation in southern Africa continues to improve. After 16 years of civil war, the Angolan Government and UNITA have finally signed a peace accord. Following the independence of Namibia, the people of South Africa have also won significant victories in their struggle against apartheid, and progress is being made towards a political settlement of the South African question. We welcome the positive measures taken by the South African

(Mr. Qian Qichen, China)

Government and hope that that Government will continue its efforts to remove obstacles to constitutional negotiations and accelerate the process aimed at a political settlement of the South African question.

We are pleased that the question of Western Sahara is moving towards a political solution. China sincerely hopes that, with the concerted efforts of the international community and the parties concerned, a proper resolution will soon be found.

We are deeply concerned about the exacerbation of ethnic, racial and religious contradictions in a number of countries, including several in Europe. The national independence and territorial integrity of some countries are under threat, while intense civil strife and political turmoil have caused serious damage to others. We are deeply disturbed by the grave situation confronting Yugoslavia today. We call on the Yugoslav people of different nationalities to solve their differences by peaceful means and to refrain from intensifying the conflict so as to enable their country to re-embark on the road of peaceful development.

It is reassuring that, following the Gulf war, the sovereignty, independence and legitimate Government of Kuwait have been restored. However, peace and stability in the Gulf region have not yet materialized, and the Middle East region remains fraught with contradictions. The achievement of peace and stability in the Middle East hinges on the early resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. As a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, China will join the rest of the international community in a continued effort to advance the Middle East peace process. We have always stood for a political settlement of the Middle East question on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, especially Security Council

(Mr. Qian Qichen, China)

resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). The occupied Arab territories should be returned, the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people restored, and the sovereignty and security of all the countries in the Middle East region, including Israel, respected and guaranteed.

We believe that the convening of an international peace conference at an appropriate time under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of the five permanent members of the Security Council and all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), would be the best means of achieving a final settlement of the Middle East question.

Pending the achievement of these targets, we support all the efforts of the parties concerned in that region that they deem appropriate and useful with a view to accelerating the Middle East peace process. To help move the peace process forward, we call upon all parties to undertake not to use force and to adopt effective measures to ease tension. The international community should endeavour to help to stop Israel's activities in establishing Jewish settlements in the occupied territories and suppressing the Palestinian inhabitants. Genuine and lasting peace can be achieved only through mutual recognition between the State of Palestine and the State of Israel for the purpose of facilitating the Middle East peace process, as well as peaceful coexistence of the Arab and the Jewish nations.

The discrepancies between North and South are aggravated by the widening economic gap and the increasing inequality between rich and poor. Such imbalance in development may lead to a more turbulent world situation. To make matters worse, more than a billion people around the world living in absolute poverty still do not have adequate food and clothing, and many are struggling against starvation and disease just to survive.

(Mr. Qian Qichen, China)

In the 1990s - the last decade of this century - the people of all countries are confronted with this increasingly acute question: where is our world going, and what kind of new international order should be established?

The establishment of a peaceful, stable, just and equitable new international order would accord with the will of the people and meet the needs of the times. It is the view of the Chinese Government that a new international order should conform to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, as well as those principles that have proved practical and are widely accepted by the international community. Facts have proved that five principles - mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity; mutual non-aggression; non-interference in each other's internal affairs; equality and mutual benefit; and peaceful coexistence - comprise the most fundamental norms governing international relations. Those principles are in keeping with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and reflect the characteristics essential to international relations of a new type. Therefore, we maintain that the new international order that is envisaged should be established on the basis of the five principles of peaceful coexistence.

For the purpose of exploring with all members of the Assembly the means of establishing a just and equitable new international order, I should like to set out, at this solemn forum, the position and opinions of the Chinese Government on the question of peace and security and on economic and social matters.

First, Having suffered from the scourge of two world wars this century, mankind has come to appreciate and cherish peace all the more deeply. The development of every country and the progress of mankind require a peaceful

(Mr. Qian Qichen, Chile)

international environment. In our view, the following points are essential to the maintenance of world peace. All countries should respect each other's sovereignty, treat each other as an equal, put differences aside in the search for common ground, engage in friendly cooperation and live in harmony. No country should seek hegemony or try to manipulate international affairs, or pursue power politics on the basis of the law of the jungle. All States - large or small, strong or weak, rich or poor - should participate in the discussion and settlement of international affairs as equal members of the international community. Every State has the right to choose independently its own social, political and economic systems and its own path of development in the light of its own national conditions. No country - in particular, no big Power - should impose its own ideology, values or mode of development on other countries. All countries should observe the principle of mutual respect for territorial integrity and the inviolability of national borders, and no country should be allowed to invade or annex the territory of other countries, under whatever pretext. Disputes between States should be settled in a reasonable manner by peaceful means, and the use or threat of force is not permissible in international relations.

Secondly, an important link in safeguarding the security of all States lies in an end to the arms race and in effective disarmament. This is an important means of easing international tension. All along, China has stood for the complete prohibition and total destruction of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, and for the banning of research into, and the development of, new weapons of mass destruction of any type. We are also for the comprehensive and balanced non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction through just, reasonable, necessary and appropriate measures. China pursues a

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policy of not advocating, encouraging or facilitating the development of nuclear weapons by other countries. To facilitate the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons, and to safeguard international peace, security and stability, China has announced its decision in principle to accede to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. In addition, China has always stood for the early conclusion of a convention banning chemical weapons and for greater effectiveness for the Convention on the Prohibition of Biological Weapons.

(Mr. Qian Qichen, China)

Not long ago the United States and the Soviet Union reached an agreement on the reduction of their strategic nuclear weapons. We welcome this development. Nevertheless, the signing of this treaty is just an initial step in the reduction of the huge strategic nuclear arsenals of the United States and the Soviet Union. Moreover, the treaty does not cover all types of nuclear weapons and does not prohibit continuing United States and Soviet efforts to improve the quality of their weapons and to create new weapons systems. Even after the prescribed reduction under this treaty, the two countries will still possess more than 90 per cent of the world's total nuclear weaponry and remain capable of destroying mankind several times over. The recent changes that occurred in the Soviet Union caused particular concern in the international community as to whether nuclear weapons can be strictly controlled. The United States and the Soviet Union, therefore, still have a long way to go in fulfilling their special responsibilities and obligations with regard to nuclear disarmament.

In principle, China is in favour of placing under fair, reasonable and effective control the trade in arms, including various sophisticated weapons. But this has to be decided by the international community through extensive consultations, with all countries on an equal footing, after full preparation.

We hold that military capabilities should be used only for the purpose of self-defence and that no country should seek a level of armament in excess of its reasonable defence needs. We support the proposal for a zone free from weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and comprehensive and balanced arms control in the region through consultations and negotiations with the countries concerned on an equal footing. The views and opinions of the countries in that region should be fully heard and respected, and the possibility of a few countries monopolizing the affair and imposing their

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views on others should be guarded against. Arms control is only a means, and a just and lasting peace in the Middle East is the objective. Arms control in the Middle East, therefore, should be linked to the Middle East peace process. The United Nations should fully play its due role in this connection and, when necessary, a conference on arms control in the Middle East should be convened with the participation of all the countries concerned.

Outer space belongs to all mankind; it should be utilized only for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of mankind. No country should develop outer space weapons. The United States and the Soviet Union, first and foremost, should stop developing, testing and deploying such weapons and destroy all space weapons in their possession. The international community should start negotiations at an early date for the conclusion of an international agreement on the complete prohibition of outer space weapons with a view to stopping and preventing the arms race from extending into outer space.

An important characteristic of current international economic relations is the aggravation of North-South contradictions and the widening of their economic gap. The majority of the developing countries remain confronted with such difficulties as crushing debt burden, negative net flow of financial resources and worsening terms of trade.*

To a large extent, the widening economic gap between the North and the South is the result of the existing inequitable and unfair international economic order. The present radical changes in the world situation have created new difficulties for the developing countries. To reverse the

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* Mr. Min (Myanmar), Vice-President, took the chair.

(Mr. Qian Qichen, China)

situation, it is necessary to establish step by step a new international economic order which should include the following elements:

Every country has the right to choose its own social system, economic model and road to development suited to its national conditions;

Every country has the right to exercise effective control over its own resources and their exploitation;

All countries are entitled to participate in the handling of international economic affairs;

The developed countries should respect and accommodate the interests and needs of the developing countries and refrain from attaching political strings to their aid; and

Efforts should be made to strengthen North-South dialogue and cooperation with a view to necessary adjustment and reform in commodity, trade, funds, debt, monetary, financial and other important fields of international economy.

The economy of the world is an interrelated and interdependent whole. While the developing countries need funds and technology from the developed countries, the latter also need the raw materials and markets of the former. In essence, the question of development hinges on North-South relations. Without a fundamental improvement in North-South relations, it will be difficult to ensure world peace and stability, and the situation will benefit neither the poor nor the rich countries. To promote common development, all countries must help each other, like passengers in the same boat, and endeavour to narrow the gap between the North and the South and establish a fair and rational international economic order based on mutual benefit and cooperation.

The environment is another outstanding problem facing the international community today. Improving the environment and protecting the Earth have a

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vital bearing on the very conditions for the survival of mankind.

The question of environment does not exist by itself. It is closely linked to economic growth and social development. Owing to historical reasons and economic backwardness, a vast number of developing countries are constrained in their ability to participate effectively in the protection of the global environment. Yet without their participation, there can be no fundamental improvement in the environment. We appeal to the countries with comparatively abundant financial and technological resources to take the lead in moving to protect the global environment and help the developing countries enhance their ability in environmental protection.

China attaches great importance to environmental protection, which has become one of its basic state policies. We have taken an active part in international cooperation in this field. Last June, at the invitation of the Chinese Government, the ministers of 41 developing countries met in Beijing for the Ministerial Conference of the Developing Countries on Environment and Development and issued the Beijing Declaration, which sets forth the principled position and basic views of the developing countries on ways to resolve the questions of global environment and development and gives expression to the common will and aspiration of three quarters of mankind for environmental protection and development. This will no doubt exert a positive influence on the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development scheduled for 1992 in Brazil and the efforts for a rational solution to the problem of global environment.

The promotion of the universal attainment of human rights and fundamental freedoms is inextricably linked to the common interests of mankind. Over the past forty years or more, the international community has made positive contributions in safeguarding the purposes stated in the Charter of the United

(Mr. Qian Qichen, China)

Nations pertaining to the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Thanks to the concerted efforts of its Member States, the United Nations has formulated nearly 70 international conventions, declarations and instruments on human rights which have played a positive role in promoting United Nations activities in the field of human rights.

For a long time, however, the human rights forum of the United Nations has been used by certain countries as a place for waging cold war, with the result that the United Nations efforts for the promotion and protection of human rights are subjected to the influence of abnormal phenomena. For example, human rights has been used as a means of pushing power politics and interfering in affairs that are basically within the jurisdiction of other States; the concept of human rights has been fragmented and double standards have been followed; some have made efforts to glorify themselves and attack others on the question of human rights and set up their own likes and dislikes as criteria of human rights in disregard of the international conventions and the specific conditions of other countries. All this not only runs counter to the purposes and principles of the Charter but also seriously hampers normal international cooperation in the field of human rights and impedes the universal realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The Chinese Government has consistently supported and respected the principles of protecting human rights contained in the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant international instruments, and has actively participated in a wide range of human rights activities in the United Nations.

We believe that in order effectively to guarantee and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms of all mankind, it is necessary to recognize the various countries' different features - their different political,

(Mr. Qian Qichen, China)

economic and social systems and their different historical, religious and cultural backgrounds. In this regard, all countries, based on the principles of respect for each other's sovereignty and non-interference in each other's internal affairs, should strive to achieve mutual understanding, seek common ground while putting aside differences and replace cold war with normal international cooperation.

(Mr. Qian Qichen, China)

In our view, racial discrimination, apartheid, colonialism, foreign aggression and occupation are gross violations of human rights that ought to be given full attention and halted by the international community. In the field cf human rights equal importance should be attached to civil and political rights, as well as to economic, social, cultural and developmental rights. We must not emphasize some rights while belittling or even denying others. For the vast number of developing countries, the most fundamental human right is the right to subsistence and development.

As you all know, China is a developing country with a population of 1.15 billion. In spite of a successful family planning policy, our population still grows by 17 million every year. By feeding 22 per cent of the world's population with only 7 per cent of the world's arable land, China has made its utmost contribution to the protection of mankind's right to subsistence. The Chinese Government has also worked actively to safeguard and guarantee the lawful rights and interests of old and young, women and children and the disabled through legislation and other effective measures, and it has had marked success. Any unprejudiced person can readily see that China today enjoys political stability and economic growth and that its people are living in peace and contentment. China's stability and development are without doubt important factors contributing to peace and stability in Asia and in the world at large. Conversely, should China be plunged into turmoil, stability in Asia and the world would be seriously impaired. China needs stability, and the world needs a stable China.

China is advancing along the road of building socialism with Chinese characteristics. Ove. the past 10 years and more we have adhered to the policies of reform and opening to the outside world and have scored noticeable

(Mr. Qian Qichen, China)

achievements in economic development. At present the Chinese people are implementing their Ten-Year Programme and their Eighth Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development. We will unswervingly deepen the reform, open the country still wider and gradually establish a new structure of planned commodity economy with a view to quadrupling the 1980 gross national product by the end of this century. In order to reach this target, a great deal of work needs to be accomplished and a huge number of large-scale projects completed. While deepening economic reform, we will also further the policy of opening to the outside world and carry out political restructuring step by step.

This past summer some regions of China were hit by severe floods, which brought the people tremendous losses in lives and property as well as in industrial and agricultural production. In some areas the loss was very heavy. The Chinese Government has adopted effective measures, funnelling large amounts of financial and material resources to assisting the disaster-stricken areas and minimizing the losses. In those areas there has been no occurrence of famine or pestilence and no influx of refugees to cities. China has been victorious in its efforts to combat the floods. It is estimated that China's gross national product will continue to grow at a rate of 6 per cent. In fighting the floods and in the subsequent relief operations, we have received sympathy and assistance from the governments and people of other countries, relevant United Nations agencies, international organizations and various quarters of the international community, for which we wish to express our heartfelt thanks.

We are happy to note that, as the most important global organization in the present world, the United Nations has in the past year played a major role

(Mr. Qian Qichen, China)

in maintaining world peace, promoting the political settlement of burning issues, enhancing development in various countries and strengthening international cooperation. Facts have proved that the mechanism of the United Nations remains effective. Here, I would like to point out in particular that Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar has for many years made fruitful efforts in this respect.

In the present complex and volatile international situation people the world over all hope that, in keeping with the purposes and principles of its Charter, the United Nations will work tirelessly to bring about fair and reasonable solutions to such regional conflicts as the one prevailing in the Middle East, promote North-South dialogue and help developing countries overcome their economic difficulties and develop their economies. We sincerely hope that the United Nations will play a positive role in advancing disarmament and in addressing the major problems facing mankind, such as environmental protection and drug control.

In this diversified international community, the search for consensus and commonality is not only the original objective set for the United Nations at its inception but also the distinctive feature of this largest international Organization. Faced with the stupendous changes occurring in the current international situation, the international community has come to regard the establishment of a new international order as a common aspiration. We hope and believe that the United Nations will play a significant role in the establishment of a fair and reasonable new international order.

Twenty years have passed since the restoration of China's lawful seat in the United Nations in 1971. Over these years China, as a permanent member of the Security Council, has played a positive role in maintaining peace and

(Mr. Qian Qichen, China)

promoting economic development in the world. In the future, China will, as always, continue to abide strictly by the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, to perform its duties conscientiously and to join the rest cf the States Member of the United Nations in actively supporting the work of the Organization, contributing its share to the promotion of world peace, security and development as well as to the establishment of a new international order.

Mr. HURD (United Kingdom): Let me first congratulate you, Mr. Vice-President, and, through you, the President, on your appointments to the high offices you hold. We are very confident that throughout the proceedings of this session of the General Assembly you and the President will carry forward our deliberations with the customary good order and good sense, and we wish you well in this task.

Last year almost of all of us speaking from this rostrum spoke of the dramatic pace of international events. Perhaps we all expected that after those dramas there would be a return to the normal tenor of diplomatic life. But, in fact, during the last 12 months change has continued with a speed and intensity that no one could have foreseen. Some of this change has been beneficial, flowing from the end of the cold war, which we all welcomed. But other changes have reminded us how much hatred and bitterness can still shape the course of our world. This general debate is the right occasion for us to see if we can trace a pattern in all these events and draw the right lessons for the future of our Organization.

First I would like to add my welcome to the seven new Members of the United Nations, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, the Republic of Korea and the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea, the Republic of the Marshall Islands

(Mr. Hurd, United Kingdom)

and the Federated States of Micronesia. The presence of you all will enrich this Organization. Mistrust between East and West kept Korea out of the United Nations for too long; now the new approaches in international relations allow you to take the seats which should have been yours long ago.

It may be rash, but I believe that we are now watching the collapse of the principle of empire. By that, I mean the principle that people can be forced to work together under a central rule in which they do not themselves participate and which has no respect for their rights. In some places the end of this principle of empire is coming slowly. In others its collapse has been sudden. For example we are seeing beyond doubt the disintegration of the last of the great colonial empires of the last century, namely, that put together by the Russian Tsars. That system, which was transformed into a communist empire by Lenin and Stalin, is now smashed for good - and smashed not by its critics or competitors from outside but by the peoples whom it sought to imprison. That old system has gone; a new system is struggling to birth. The new system tries to accommodate the principle of national identity without following that principle into anarchy.

(Mr. Hurd, United Kingdom)

Nationalism is a legitimate expression of a people's aspirations; but we have all learned the hard way that nationalism is not enough. A new flag, an old flag revived, a new capital, a new parliament, new uniforms do not in themselves bring security and happiness. Nationalism can be sterile unless it respects the rights of individuals and minorities. Nationalism can be dangerous unless nation States work together for collective security and collective prosperity.

So consent within nations, cooperation between nations, must be the pattern at which we aim.

These or similar thoughts must have been in many of our minds as we watched the tragedy of Yugoslavia unfolding. I hope and believe that the Security Council, at its meeting this afternoon, can add its unique authority to the efforts already being made by the European Community and by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) to help those among all the peoples of Yugoslavia who want to see an end to bloodshed and the beginning of a new pattern for their future. I share the emotions and anxieties expressed a few minutes ago here by Hans Dietrich Genscher, on behalf of Germany, and all of us in the European Community will work strenuously, continuously, to help the Yugoslavs find that new pattern for their future.

We cannot prescribe or dictate this pattern either for the peoples of the Soviet Union or for the peoples of Yugoslavia. We can show sympathy, understanding and help for the huge task of reform now under way. In the Soviet Union when people are hungry this winter we can help to feed them out of the surpluses of the West and, I hope, of central and eastern Europe. We can provide - we are providing - technical assistance, particularly to help

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bring the food from the farms to the shops. We can build up our relationships with the Republics of the Soviet Union as they gain in authority. We can continue the friendly pressure for human rights embodied in the Charter of Paris of the CSCE, signed last November. It is not in the interests of the international community that the Soviet Union should entirely disintegrate, leaving no central authority to deal with those matters where central decisions are needed. Dramatic progress has been made over arms control and disarmament. That progress should not be dissipated or put at risk by lack of adequate coherent authority in the Soviet Union. The Republics are making their own arrangements with the centre to influence the course of foreign policy, and we look forward to the outcome. But it would be a pity, from the point of view of the United Nations, if the cooperation which we have recently come to expect from the Soviet Union on, for example, the Middle East, the problems of the Gulf, the problems of Africa, were dissipated just when its usefulness is most apparent.

I mentioned South Africa. The situation there is entirely different, but there is one common thread. Here too we are watching the disappearance of a regime which was based on suppression and discrimination. No one can now suppose that apartheid can survive or can return. The courage shown by State President De Klerk, Mr. Nelson Mandela and other leaders of the South African people deserves to be recognized and encouraged. Here again, it is not for the outside world to decide on the constitutional pattern of the new South Africa, though I think we are entitled to urge forward those who are now beginning that task. It is for us, and particularly perhaps as far as we are concerned for the members of the Commonwealth at our forthcoming Heads of Government meeting in Harare, to consider how we can give practical help to

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the new South Africa. No one who studies the statistics of population growth in that country measured against economic production, no one who visits the townships outside Durban, Johannesburg and Cape Town can doubt either the need or the urgency of this help if the new South Africa is to make a good start and establish itself as a helpful, supportive neighbour to the other countries of southern Africa.

Against this background, against this pattern, how can we build up the performance of our United Nations? Nothing of course changes the elementary duty of the United Nations to do all it can to protect its Members by checking and reversing aggression. That is fundamental.

Iraq's invasion of Kuwait was an unusually clear example. Now that Iraq is out of Kuwait, the United Nations is insisting - for the first time - that a Member State forgo weapons of mass destruction and pay compensation to its victims. The United Nations is resolved to maintain sanctions until Iraq shows that it is playing a constructive part in regional stability, until Iraq observes the rules of international law. Iraq has to comply with the Security Council resolutions, which are mandatory. If it does not, it must face the consequences, and the consequences of persistent defiance would be grave indeed.

So we all share the responsibility to prevent the re-emergence of a danger such as the one we have experienced from Iraq. Everyone accepts that many States depend on arms imports to assure a reasonable level of security and the inherent right of self-defence, which is recognized in our Charter.

But the conflict in the Gulf showed how peace can be undermined when a country acquires an arsenal which goes way beyond the needs of self-defence, and we in the United Nations have to make sure that that does not happen

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again. We believe that all States should observe and apply the three principles: transparency, consultation and action.

And that is why, as a significant step towards transparency, Britain has proposed a universal register of arms transfers under the auspices of the United Nations. Such a register would alert the international community to an attempt by a country to build up holdings of conventional weapons beyond a reasonable level. With the support of our partners in the European Community, and others, Britain is sponsoring a draft resolution at this session of the General Assembly which we hope will result in the prompt establishment of such a register.

The process of consultations on arms exports is well under way. It has been discussed at many international gatherings in recent months, and we have been encouraged by the willingness of arms exporters, large and small, to exchange information about arms sales which hitherto has been jealously guarded. After that, we have to harmonize as best we can the criteria - the tests - by which each arms exporter judges a possible sale.

Openness of this kind will encourage confidence. Confidence allows action. In Europe we agreed on the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) last November. The United States and the Soviet Union signed the START Treaty in July. The main Powers, the main arms suppliers are beginning to reduce the level of their own armaments; they are not simply asking other people to do so. The search for this lower level of armaments is never going to be easy in the real world, and I think we are justified in taking it step by step, provided that one step does in fact follow another. We are justified in being realistic, provided that realism is not an excuse for inaction. The

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British Government announced yesterday that henceforth we shall adopt a policy of full-scope safeguards as a condition of the supply of significant new nuclear supplies. This means that such goods will not be exported to any country, other than the nuclear-weapon States, where there are any unsafeguarded nuclear installations.

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We believe there is another lesson which stems from our experiences in the Middle East in the last year. It is the need to handle emergencies better. Tragedy has touched not just the Middle East, but Bangladesh and Africa, and I should like to pay tribute to the international agencies for all the devotion and effort they have put into tackling these tragedies. But we have learned again that coordination, early response, effective delivery are crucial.

That is why we are proposing a new and, we hope, more effective structure for handling emergencies and disasters starting with an inventory of human and material resources available from donors and non-governmental organizations. At the apex - at the top of this structure - we would like to see one high-powered official immediately under the Secretary-General. There needs to be prompt decision-making and funding in the critical early weeks of an emergency. Preparation is the key to success and would, under our proposal, be the responsibility of one person. The United Nations is best placed to deal with the human consequences of natural disasters.

The United Nations, as has already been stressed, can do more to protect the global environment. Agreement on how we conserve the resources of our planet and use them for sustainable development is equally vital for the future of the world. We have to establish clear priorities soon for what next year's Conference on Environment and Development, in Rio, can achieve.

The United Nations can also help with another problem which is looming larger in our world. I refer to the increasing number of migrants around the world. Eighty per cent of refugess are in the third world. Developed countries face an unprecedented growth in the numbers seeking asylum. Some of these are refugees as defined by the United Nations in its 1951 Convention.

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But most are not. We would not be able to continue to offer political asylum in the present way if the system were overwhelmed by economic migrants. Such migrants can deprive the countries they come from of youth and talent and, as we see in Hong Kong - and begin to see in Western Europe - economic migration above a certain level can also create serious political and social strains in the receiving country.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has a vital role within its sphere and its sphere expands all the time. But the international community as a whole has to be increasingly aware of the fundamental nature of this problem.

And so, resistance to aggression, search for disarmament, relief of suffering: these are all parts of the gigantic and I must say growing tasks laid on the United Nations. The Secretary-General has always laid a particular emphasis on preventive diplomacy, on trying to tackle a dispute or a danger before it explodes into violence and suffering. And we have learned to rely on his combination of skill, firmness and courtesy - a combination which he has made very much his own. El Salvador, Western Sahara, Angola: in all these the United Nations has been active either in seeking to prevent trouble or in steering a problem onto a new track away from the suffering which has already occurred. I welcome in particular, and most recently, the recognition by Guatemala of the independence of the State of Belize. This makes a big contribution to regional stability.

It is very good news also that in the last few days the remaining obstacles to a comprehensive political settlement on Cambodia have been overcome. This settlement now needs to be concluded with all speed. The United Nations will remain firmly engaged in carrying out the peace process

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and this will be an ambitious and, indeed, expensive, unprecedented undertaking. But the prize here for Cambodia - for Indochina generally - is very great.

May I, on behalf of the country intimately involved in another of these problems - the affairs of Cyprus - wish the Secretary-General particular success in bringing that dispute to an agreed conclusion. He knows he has our full support in trying to persuade those closely concerned first into a negotiation and then into a settlement.

Through all these different events, these different problems - and many others I have not mentioned - we can see the same thrust. It is a thrust towards better government, more representative government, better cooperation between nations, greater concern for the individual and his or her rights. No one with any sense of history supposes that this current will run with the same strength and at the same time through all the countries and continents represented here. There will be bastions where authoritarian rule still meets only a faint challenge. There will be cruel and bloody quarrels resurrected from a past which we hoped was dead. There will be setbacks, occasions where hope is stimulated, then delayed or even reversed; and it would be patronizing for any one of us to suppose that there is only one model, only one type of institution which can reflect this trend. There is no Westminster model, no Paris model, no Washington model, certainly no Kremlin model which can be exported unchanged to Africa, Latin America, the Middle East or Asia. We all set about it in different ways.

In negotiations inside our European community, we are working hard for an important European step forward before the end of this year along the path of joint action by sovereign States. The peoples of the Soviet Union, as I have

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mentioned, faced with a quite different set of problems, will be working out their own answers. In Latin America, in Africa and Asia, the same trends are clearly visible. The age of alibis is over. The rhetoric of the 1950s and the 1960s - which as I remember used to echo rather wearily in this Hall - makes no sense any more. Imperialism can no longer, in 1991, be blamed for bad government. The capitalist system can no longer be blamed for lack of prosperity. The evidence, the facts, the experience of the last decade have proved the contrary. I believe that the United Nations, the Commonwealth to which we belong, the regional organizations can all help this realism to expand and deepen.

We are talking, are we not, about consent in place of command, freer trade, edging out protectionism, honest government replacing corruption, government based on elections rather than dictatorship, nations cooperating instead of seeking to dominate. These are the aims - clearly stated in our Charter, clearly stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Sometimes they have seemed far out of reach. I believe that, as a result of recent events and currents, they are no longer out of reach and we in Britain, the British Government, will work enthusiastically and energetically within the United Nations to bring them within the grasp of all.

Mr. DIENSTBIER (Czechoslovakia): First of all, allow me to congratulate Ambassador Shihabi of Saudi Arabia on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly. I wish him every success in meeting his responsibilities.

Allow me to express my appreciation, as well, to Mr. De Marco, his predecessor, who represents a small country, yet had the courage to point to some of the Organization's major problems. He did so with a decisiveness that has few precedents.

It is also my most pleasant obligation to thank the Secretary-General. In guiding the Organization, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar demonstrated a noble vision. The broad outlook of this politician proved to be in concert with our times. His integrity and assurance deserve our admiration.

Let me welcome our new Members: the Republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lituania, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea. We look forward to the active contribution of these new Members, and are prepared to cooperate closely with them on the various items on our agenda.

Last year's session was the first I attended as Foreign Minister of a country freed from totalitarianism. Since then, I have reflected seriously upon the role of the United Nations in this world of ours, which has changed so much. Why, I have wondered, was the Organization's contribution to putting an end to the cold war only a modest one, even though it was founded to maintain peace?

I represent one of the countries that over the past two years has experienced a dramatic transformation on the road to democracy. This transformation is helping to change the political map of the world, and so

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perhaps we have a certain right, even an obligation, to judge how capable the United Nations is of adapting to new impulses and reacting to them for the general welfare. I hope therefore that I may be excused for abandoning tradition and relegating comments on individual items on this year's agenda to discussions in the Main Committees.

Allow me to paraphrase the words that President Havel used two years ago to address the situation in my own country. Our organization too is not exactly flourishing! Its history is very controversial. Successes combine with failures.

Very soon after the Second World War, the United Nations, with so many hopes invested in it, turned into a cold war battlefield. It was dramatically influenced by the false concept of the so-called international class struggle. It failed to cope with flagrant violations of its own Charter and of international law. The most painful failure, from my perspective, occurred, of course, in 1968 when Czechoslovakia was invaded by the Warsaw Treaty countries.

Later, during the era of so-called super-Power détente, we all witnessed the United Nations turn into a forum for rhetorical somersaults that concealed its inability to solve real problems effectively. We witnessed the gradual withering of the idea of multilateralism and of the last remnants of the Organization's prestige. Even disapproval on the part of the vast majority of Member States did not prevent this very forum from being desecrated by people who defended aggression and violence.

And yet, the Organization played a substantial role in decolonization. It contributed to the evolution and codification of international law. It

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served us all as an umbrella sheltering an entire roster of useful agencies that deal with everything from industrial development and atomic energy to health care and telecommunications. And, what is probably the most important point, every September, this very Hall turned into a meeting place of all those who otherwise might not have had anywhere else to meet.

Today, it may appear as though the dark periods of the Organization's activity are over, as though its renovation is only a matter of capturing the spirit of the times and introducing several organizational improvements.

And, true enough: the situation today is better than any of us would have dared to anticipate only a short time ago. We have seen an end to the ideological confrontation that blocked a realistic view of matters. The East-West conflict, which for 40 years threatened general destruction, in effect resolved itself, once the ideology that supported it crumbled, fully demonstrating its impotence. The interests of humanity have once again become a well-recognized priority. The collapse of bipolarity revives our renewed appreciation of multilaterality. Two years ago, the Secretary-General correctly observed that

> "the United Nations has been intensely involved in activities to bring peace to troubled regions of the world. ... Indeed, the assistance of the world Organization is being sought as never before in its history." (A/44/1, p.3)

No longer does one third of mankind suffer the grip of a totalitarian system. Nevertheless, the Organization often seems unable to transcend the shadow of its own past. This is why it is not in the forefront of world developments, why it merely reflects, belatedly and imperfectly, these

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developments. This situation is all the more disturbing in view of the extent and immediacy of the Organization's tasks.

One critical mission of the United Nations is to bridge the chasm between the North and the South, which is expanding menacingly. Civilization as we know it will, at the end of this century, simply not have a chance if it is divided by enormous differences in well-being and social welfare. The collapse of an ideology is not sufficient for resolving this problem.

Equally pressing is the solution of acute global problems that the founders of the United Nations could only dimly foresee. They are now omnipresent. They confront us in a number of areas, including the environment, energy, population and migration. We are witnessing an alarming escalation in international crime, terrorism, drug addiction and the spread of new diseases. These phenomena jeopardize not merely individuals, but also sometimes even entire nations. If the United Nations fails to react to these supra-national problems far more energetically than it has to date, it will be disqualified from dealing with critical global issues. At stake is the welfare of future generations. The Preamble to our Charter calls upon us to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war", but this is not enough at a time when civilization can self-destruct in a number of other, wholly unexpected ways.

I propose, for example, that wherever it is possible, we consider together a strong effort to convert weapons manufacture into production benefiting the environment. The forthcoming Conference on Environment and Development in Brazil will address this problem.

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I believe that our Organization should set the defence of human rights, the natural and inalienable birthright of every human being, as one of its prime objectives. It is no longer enough to have them codified or even to debate how well they are safeguarded. Those of us who experienced the gradual degeneration of so-called "really existing socialism" know full well that without enforcing these rights comprehensively and across the board, all else in society inevitably becomes a hollow shell, as well.

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We also realize that the poor and the suffering will not enjoy their human rights so long as their living conditions do not radically improve. Progress in these two areas is thus interconnected. Ignoring abuses of human rights anywhere in the world is morally and politically unacceptable, as we have experienced in the distant and more recent past. We are convinced that it is not possible to argue principles of sovereignty and non-interference when the matter at issue is that of preventing ruthless, intentional and mass violations of human rights and freedoms. In fact, it is necessary to go even further in this direction. The United Nations, equipped with the appropriate authority, should stand vigilant watch over human rights everywhere in the world, and people anywhere in the world should be able to rely on its capacity to redress violations of these rights.

All this begs the question: Can the United Nations be better than the sum of its Members? Are we not told year after year that the Organization cannot accomplish more than what its Member States allow? And if this were true, would we even have the right to criticize it and seek improvments? I think we will discover that more than one thread leads to better solutions within the Charter itself. Its real potential has hardly been tapped. The Charter binds all Member States to act in a manner that will allow the Organization to accomplish its objectives successfully.

Our world Organization must be more than the sum of its Members. Particular national interests have often been advanced, sometimes even ruthlessly, in conflict with our common interest. It should be possible to hold such conflicts within reasonable and mutually acceptable limits. Subjecting one's own interests to higher international needs is also in one's own interest. In this there should be no difference between nations big and

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small, developed and less developed. It is precisely the degree of mutual responsibility and tolerance that draws the line between a weak and a strong United Nations, between a paralysed Organization and an effective one.

A year ago the General Assembly met under the omen of the Persian Gulf War. This year we are meeting under the omen of its difficult conclusion. The end to traditional East-West rivalry has certainly contributed to the restoration of peace. In this the United Nations played an important role: it helped fight aggression and restored the rule of law. This was a serious test of whether our Organization is capable of facing a threat to international peace and security, whether it can react to naked aggression. The United Nations did not fail this test, and this is very encouraging. True, the Organization did not manage to prevent Iraqi aggression, did not find a diplomatic solution to the crisis and did not even employ the security mechanism outlined in its Charter. Nevertheless, the United Nations proceeded in the spirit of its Charter and contributed to effective cooperation between the Security Council and the peace alliance. Thus the United Nations definitely played a role in forcing the aggressor to retreat when faced by the international community.

Last year's fears that the use of force in obtaining justice would weaken the United Nations have proved unwarranted. Moreover, once again it transpires that totalitarian and tyrannical regimes are likely to resort to war and to escalate conflicts, whereas democracies are beacons of law and peace. A clear moral follows from this: nobody who might wish to follow the Iraqi example can count on doing so with impunity. This applies also to obvious preparations for acts of aggression. Objections on the basis of sovereignty and non-interference have to be cast aside. Too much is at

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stake. Every Munich leads to catastrophes that are always greater than the one it seeks to prevent.

The moral of the Gulf war is all the more important because the Gulf is not the only area of conflict; national and ethnic conflicts are flaring up even in Europe, which earlier at least appeared to be stable.

Last year's developments once more confirmed that justice and security are inseparable. Our common security depends upon moving towards a unity founded on generally valid principles of humanity, and this indicates the direction the United Nations should take.

The implementation of these principles would make it possible for the United Nations to play a more important role as an intermediary in conflicts that are of concern to us all - in Yugoslavia as well as in the Middle East. I think that the convening of a Middle East conference as well as the repealing of the resolution equating Zionism with racism would be steps in the right direction.

The very existence of a strong international organ can in many cases influence nations' behaviour, making it unnecessary to turn to force, which truly is the last resort.

Reviewing the General Assembly agenda is sometimes a sad exercise. Year after year it stubbornly features a variety of prestigious items whose only point is to debate obsolete resolutions. Is there, for example, any point in dealing with dozens of disarmament resolutions adopted year after year in virtually unchanged form? The situation in which these issues are being resolved has fundamentally changed. Without questioning good intentions or underestimating persistent negotiating efforts, I suggest that actual results are incommensurate with the efforts and resources expended on these issues.

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These efforts amount to little more than filling dusty archival shelves with stacks of unread printed matter. The problems I have just mentioned also touch upon United Nations activity in economic and social development. The most important phenomenon in the relationship of East and West is unquestionably the elimination of bipolarity. However, what should be truly instructive for the United Nations in the economic sphere is the absolute collapse of a system based on the idea of administrative redistribution of the property of the rich to benefit the poor.

And yet to a large extent the United Nations has so far based its activity on this very idea. This idea still pervades the existing concept of a new international economic order and a host of other documents. This is a blind alley. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe know from their own experience that such a system leads at best to stagnation, but more likely it leads to general and unstoppable decay. Czechoslovakia sadly corroborates this; it ranks today among the less developed countries and, like so many others, it feels an increased and urgent need for foreign assistance. Our attitude, however, is based on the premise that no assistance can be a lasting source of riches. It can only contribute to fundamental reforms which will allow us to create our wealth ourselves.

That does not mean that we are insensitive to the just requirements and needs of developing countries. Despite our own difficulties, we also want to contribute to helping them as efficiently as possible. Contrary to some of my predecessors, though, I am not here to recite false data on the extent of our foreign assistance. This assistance will, for the time being, be modest. However, it will be directed far more clearly at effective development programmes within the United Nations framework and it will increase as soon as our economic circumstances permit.

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However, we are very concerned over shortcomings in the area of United Nations programmes. A substantial percentage of resources designated for development assistance is gobbled up by the bureaucracies of our own Organization and of recipient countries, and too little remains for development proper. We all know about endless evaluation missions which will do anything to avoid the one important issue - an evaluation of their own uselessness. We cannot accept the existing insufficient coordination between various components of the United Nations system. We are quite baffled by the degree of their duplication - if this is indeed the right expression for not two but three or more United Nations agencies supporting separate offices in the same country, where each deals with the same problems but where, owing to the dispersion of efforts and funds nothing is actually solved.

We all feel the need for our Organization to adapt to the new requirements and increasing demands put on its activity. This is why changes are called for everywhere: in the composition of United Nations bodies, their mutual relationships and the way they operate, the extent of the Secretary-General's authority, the status of the Secretariat, and the financing of the United Nations.

However, changes are useful only if they result in something demonstrably better. I am encouraged that some such changes are already taking place. We are determined to help them along in every possible way.

In particular, I have in mind the transition from propaganda duels to realistic negotiations, from mechanical vote-counting to efforts to reach a consensus. These efforts should improve conditions for using preventive diplomacy and perhaps even for accepting the idea of an arbitration court, which could become an important mechanism for solving controversies. The

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opinions of Member States also reflect positive changes. We are delighted that members of the Group of 7 stressed in their July meeting in London their determination to strengthen the United Nations and to turn it into a more powerful and effective instrument of peace, international security and protection of human rights.

Of course, we realize that it will not be easy to agree on which obstacles prevent the United Nations from working more effectively, and thus what needs to be changed. The role of the permanent members of the Security Council, for example, is one subject of discussion. We consider the principle of unanimity among Security Council permanent members a lasting one. No longer do we need to fear that ideological antagonisms will lead to a veto vote. Indeed, only now is the power of veto becoming an instrument of agreement because it forces the holders of that power to seek consensus solutions.

However, a number of other changes should be undertaken immediately. The sight of Foreign Ministers day after day presenting their countries' positions on every item of the agenda to an almost empty hall is somewhat comic. It should be possible to distribute written positions beforehand and devote meetings to the problems which actually burden us. With such a procedure, everyone would gladly attend. It should be possible, for example, to merge the Special Political and the decolonization Committees of the General Assembly. We must seriously evaluate the continuing utility of other bodies which carry on stereotyped discussions and act as though the entire raison d'être of the United Nations were concentrated in their own existence. The question of the effectiveness of the General Assembly agenda is also an

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absolutely pressing one. Executing such changes would in itself revitalize the United Nations Charter, making it unnecessary to revise it.

Our Organization is approaching its fiftieth birthday. Rational and well-thought-out changes could create a significant revival on this anniversary.

In Prague last June our President, Václav Havel, offered some thoughts on the spirit needed to meet and shape our rapidly changing times. I believe that we could make the kinds of alterations I have been proposing in this spirit, and so, in concluding, I should like to quote Mr. Havel's remark. He said:

> "In fact we are all somewhat taken by surprise by the magnitude and urgency of the task which issues from the magnitude of the hope opening up before us.
>
> "What follows from all this? I would say two things: first, the obligation of not fearing daring, unconventional and radical decisions which lead towards the distant future and preparing for it; second, the obligation of understanding the difficult and broken terrain, at times quite risky in its opacity, on which we stand and on which we must make decisions."

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.